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Dance with a fish? Sensory Human-nonhuman Encounters in the Waterscape of Match fishing

Abstract

This study sets out to explore human-nonhuman encounters in the leisure activity of match fishing. Informed by practice theory, studies on the body and the senses, and human-animal literature, it focuses on analysing the practice-specific, embodied and sensory doings and sayings of both humans and nonhumans during match fishing. The findings from a three-year sensory ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Finnish Lapland suggest that human-nonhuman encounters can be characterised as partner dancing. It is a dance between a fish and an angler taking place in a dance hall of waters, in which the weather acts as an orchestra framing the rhythm and tempo of the dance. Considering both fishes and anglers, the study emphasises the agential and embodied quality of human-nonhuman encounters. It challenges the dominant position of the human, suggesting a move from anthropomorphism to zoomorphism—animalising the angler in the dance with a fish. The study also provides novel insights into the dynamic nature of waterscape, highlighting its dual nature, consisting of the underwater world and the above-water world. In sum, this study offers a detailed account of the dynamic interactions between humans, nonhumans, and the natural environment.

KEYWORDS: human-nonhuman encounter, body, practice, senses, waterscape, sensory ethnography

Introduction

Recently, there has been an increasing interest in including the nonhuman world within the study of leisure experiences and landscapes (Hughes, 2017). Instead of focusing merely on humans, scholars have begun to explore leisure as a complex, multispecies phenomenon. For instance, researchers have explored human-animal encounters with

horses (Dashper, 2017) or dogs (Carr, 2014), and how the space shapes these encounters (Cloke & Perkins, 2005). These studies—echoing the wider ‘animal’ and ‘non-human turn’ in the social sciences (Despret, 2004; Haraway, 2008)—have been valuable in challenging the prevalent anthropocentric thinking in leisure studies and paving the way toward a more balanced treatise between humans, non-humans, and environments.

To continue this literature, this study seeks to examine human and non-human encounters in the hobbyist activity of match fishing. This case provides us a fruitful context for further theorising nature of encounters between humans, non-humans and the natural environment. It allows us to highlight the sensory and bodily nature of the encounter for both the fish and the human, and to consider the particularities of a waterscape as a context in which and with which these encounters take place.

To study these encounters, we combine practice theoretical stances (Schatzki, 2002, Reckwitz, 2002) with anthropology-zoo-genetic ones (Despret, 2004) drawing also upon literature on the bodies, senses and movements (e.g., Howes, 2005; Hui 2012). This study is based on a three-year fieldwork conducted in Finnish Lapland, employing a combination of sensory ethnography (Valtonen et al., 2010) and multispecies ethnography (Dashper, 2016).

As a result, the study illuminates the complex choreography of match fishing practice that we characterize as partner dancing. It is a dance between a fish and an angler that takes place in a dance hall of waterbodies. The weather acts as a dance band, orchestrating the rhythm and the tempo of the dance. Our study provides a novel understanding of the dynamic and changing nature of human-nonhuman encounters, highlighting the sensoriality of these encounters, including the non-human sensuous of the fish.

The paper begins by reviewing the previous literature on human-animal encounters, after which it discusses the practice-theoretical perspective of the study. The methodological section describes the research context and the fieldwork. The analysis, informed by a narrative research approach, illustrates how the encounters taking place in a fishing practice can be described as a ‘Dance with a fish’. To conclude, we present the contributions of the study to the existing leisure literature.

Previous Literature

Social scientists have explored different encounters between humans and water systems as well as different types of water animals and organisms. While Elsbeth Probyn (2016), for instance, has studied aspects of ‘human-fish entanglements’ in the sea, we explore these entanglements in the context of waterbodies, freshwater fish, and sport fishing.

Freshwater angling has gained relatively little attention in leisure research (see however Bear & Eden, 2011). Therefore, we lean on studies of hunting because hunting and fishing both are activities that entail a close sensual, embodied relationship between nature and non-humans (Franklin, 2001; Lovelock, 2008; Mordue, 2009). In these activities, it is not only the co-agency of humans and animals that matters but also the delicate tension that these agencies produce (Franklin, 2001). The heart of hunting is, indeed, contest based on two sets of senses, that of the human and that of the animal (Marvin 2005) To date, the focus has been on the human senses. Studies demonstrate how hunters seek to sharpen their understanding of the senses of the animals, as well as their own ability to counter and overcome these animals’ senses (ibid).

In fishing, there is no honing of the human senses, because humans do not possess any sense organs that fish do not possess. Quite to the contrary, the fish has

sensory organs that humans do not have because their senses are adapted to the water – humans, for their part, have difficulty seeing and hearing under the water. However, fishermen attempt to alter their own embodiment and senses to match those of the fish. As Martin Lee Mueller (2017) ‘Being salmon, being human’ demonstrates in his book, our sense of who we are as humans is mirrored in our lived relationships with other creatures. Mueller (ibid.) sees himself as an embodied mind pondering the lives of other species with very different embodied minds. In his words, his body becomes an arena of confrontation with otherness in a dialogue between the researcher and the salmon. In the same way, Donna Haraway (2008) considers the relationality between the human and the non-human species, pondering how non-human worlds can change us as we change them.

The vital role of the body and the senses has also been acknowledged in studies of leisure experiences and landscapes (Hughes, 2017). Allen-Collinson and Leledaki (2015), for instance, point out that just ‘being-in-the-out-door-world’ is a sensuous and intensely embodied act. Humberstone’s (2011) study of windsurfing provides another case in point detailing how the body interacts with its natural surroundings via the senses. A recent study of Hughes (2017), for its part, investigates the relationship between the senses and the natural environment by showing how paddling, as a sensuous leisure activity, is deeply haptic and acoustic. Then again, Brown (2017) touches on the leisure environment by investigating how the identity of an offshore sailor is contingent upon being attuned to one’s environment via the senses. Studies focusing on sporting activities with animals have, in turn, paid attention to the human-built (obstacle course) or partly natural land-based landscape (eventing course) in which leisure activities such as agility or riding take place (Davies et al. 2019; Włodarczyk, 2017). Our activity, match fishing, occurs in a non-built environment, waterscape, and we address this encounter from a practice theoretical perspective, as explained next.

Theoretical Perspective

Our theoretical perspective draws upon practice theories, literature on movements and mobility, and literature that discuss the body and the senses. The form of practice theory we lean on takes a cultural stance towards understanding social action and social order (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002). Being an anti-individualistic approach, the analytic attention is directed to practices that organize and shape individual action. Practices, per se, are conceived as skilful performances from a meaningful repertoire of bodily doings and sayings as well as accompanying sensations (Schatzki, 2002), including elements of interconnected forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002).

Put differently, practices are assemblages of these elements, and they are ‘sets of hierarchically organized doings and sayings, tasks and projects’ (Schatzki, 2002, p. 59–63). Each time people bring these elements together and organise them, they take part in the act of ‘practice-as-performance’ (Hui, 2012), in which they reproduce the routinised activities of a practice. We treat trolling as a practice of this kind, as a type of performed, integrative practice (Schatzki, 2002).

Practice theoretical accounts highlight the embodied nature of practicing, conceiving the body as a carrier of practice (e.g., Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002). Commonly, bodily activities are discussed in terms of competences, know-how and skills. For instance, a bodily activity, such as landing a fish, is something fishermen do as part of their practice with their skilful bodies. Practices—and attendant rules, values and skills—become thus embodied once they are learnt. In this sense, bodies and practices constitute each other in the embodiment of practices. The body learns to act in a practice-specific way, and in doing so, maintains and reproduces the practice.

The body necessarily is a sensing body. When enacting bodily activities, the practitioner perceives the world and judges it through the senses. Importantly, the embodied practitioner develops sensory skills that help him or her accomplish the activities at hand (Vannini, 2011). The senses are not only a means of apprehending physical phenomena, but are also invested with cultural values and meaning (e.g., Classen, 1997; Howes, 2005).

Embodied practitioners perform acts of movement; the more seemingly static acts, or even motionless ones, entail movement of some sort (Hui, 2012). The mobile activities are particularly central to our encounters with nature, as the body and its particular 'equipment' must anticipate and react to the continually changing environment (Humberstone, 2011). Through pondering the micro-movements of the body, we can analyse the dance—capturing its sequences, rhythms and routines. The movements of the body and its limbs allow the sensory inspection and observation of our surroundings.

Our treatise acknowledges that also the non-humans are carriers of practice. In troll fishing, the non-human world actively contributes to the perpetuation of practices. The fish in the waterbody swim their routes below the surface and propel their sensing bodies through the water. Fish have also own bodily routines and rhythmicity (e.g., eating, sleeping, mating) that form underwater patterns, constituting the secrets of the world of the fish. Likewise, the weather and water have the capacity to enable, constrain, direct and redirect human practices and thereby shape the forms of coexistence and action (Rantala et al., 2011). In this sense, non-humans—fish, weather and water—are treated as active elements within practices that can be routine or, conversely, can involve random and unusual, emergent happenings.

The Pickerian metaphor of a 'dance of agency' is apt for our analysis: 'we act in the world, the world acts on us, to and from, in a dynamic process' Pickering (2017, p.

4). All the agents (anglers, fish and waterbody) are unpredictably and emergently transformed, and agency performed during the dance is distributed among those who take part in fishing practices (Mattila et al., 2018). There is, however, an imbalance of power between different practitioners. In our case, the fish, in some occasions, have little possibility to refuse being part of that practice.

Research Methodology

To empirically investigate the anglers' embodied and sensory encounters with the fishes and the water, the study leans on sensory ethnography (e.g., Howes, 2005; Classen, 1997; Valtonen et al., 2010). This enables to explore the senses in action in the immediate settings within which the activity takes place. In line with the practice-theoretical lens, the analytic focus is directed toward the ways in which the senses play a part in the performance of practices and in the subsequent encounters with the social and natural world.

The lead author conducted a three-year multi-site ethnographic fieldwork in Finnish Lapland by participating in 22 match fishing competitions, which continued from 8 to 24 hours, and took place in a variety of freshwaters. Each year, the trips lasted from June to November. Therefore, a wide spectrum of Lappish weather—from heat to sleet—was experienced. Match fishing refers to the competitive pursuit of angling in an attempt to catch the heaviest and/or largest fish within a defined period of time and according to a specified set of rules (Cowx, 2002). The scrutinised mode of match fishing is trolling, a method of fishing in which some form of bait is drawn on a line through the water from watercrafts by two to four anglers. Competitive trolling provides an arena for the investigation of human and nonhuman encounters and grazing. The angler directly and indirectly (thorough technology) encounters many species of fish and other

non-human actors, such as birds and flora (e.g., the unwanted touch of bottom plants or snags), not to mention mosquitos. The author was a member of a local trolling club whose members—all men—participated in fishing competitions. The very idea of fishing competition carries several stereotypical masculine values such as domination and conquest over nature (Adkins, 2010; Birke, 2012).

The fishing competition itself oozes of the human desire for challenge and racing. It is a ‘showdown’ stage, where anglers gather together in a competitive manner to perform ‘dance choreographies’ that entail skilful intra-actings of all the entangled elements of a practice. The competition also represents a moment where you are not supposed to fail, as in just ‘asking to dance’ is not good enough —anglers ‘gotta dance’.

During the competitions, the lead author was one angler among others, either in his own boat or as a crewmember in other angler’s watercrafts. The researcher thus immersed his body in fishing activities and, for that matter, moments of paused mobility (Sheller, 2014). This allowed him to make participant observations ‘from the inside’. He also carefully ‘listened’ his own body, reflecting this bodily knowledge within the fishing practice and comparing it with the ways that a fish senses. The latter turned out to be the most challenging part of the fieldwork: the researcher had to be simultaneously aware of own his own human sensory embodiment and put effort into detaching himself from them to grasp the sensing body of the fish.

The data were generated via participant and non-participant observations (written head notes, field notes and diaries), informal discussions at the water and on shore with other anglers, visual materials (e.g., photos, video clips) and autobiographical stories. Most commonly, the data were gathered via observations and technical apparatuses. For instance, closely following the screen of a fish-detecting sonar system or depth camera allowed the ethnographer to follow the movements of the fish. While

doing so, he was constantly asking himself questions. What did the fish just do? Why did it do like that? How did it do it? What senses were involved in these actions? Gradually, the researcher was able to create a sensorial connection and understanding between the studied fish and the human, as well as the associated micro-mobilities of the body, bodily rhythms, and motions (Sheller, 2014). Thus, interconnection can occur without actual 'contact zones' via technologised observing. This 'distant' way of familiarising differs from Haraway's (2008, p. 3) view of 'learn to be worldly from grappling with', in which familiarising happens in close contact with humans and non-humans. Apparently, distant ways may reduce the 'unknown' characteristics of fish, and the non-human other can become close and familiar (Bear & Eden, 2011).

The analysis took the form of a practice-theory-informed data-driven narrative analysis (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). During and after the fieldwork, the author wrote autobiographical narratives that combined his own experiences and the observations of human and non-human others, discussions and reflections. They form the 'Lego blogs' of a grand narrative. The results of the analysis are also represented in the form of a narrative, short vignettes to be more precise. These vignettes are chosen to illuminate the various aspects of dancing with a fish, as the following section shows. They are written 'from inside' of a cultural practice of fishing that is competitive and male-cantered by its nature.

Human-nonhuman Encounters in the Waterscape of Match fishing

The wind has calmed down, and the heavy rain has stopped. The air is moist, and the sky is full of shades of grey. A gentle waving ripples the surface of the lake. The wind has blurred the watercolour. Bouncing gently, our watercraft moves at a slow trolling speed above the water. I stand up from the bench and glance

around. There are no isles or shoals in sight. I can't spot any fellow anglers either, only flat water as far as the eye can see. One could say that we are in the middle of nowhere, but this is not the case. We are exactly there where we want to be. We are in our fishing grounds—our secret water hotspot.

I gaze down and look at the large colour screen of the sonar. A diverse and lively underwater landscape is displayed. The sonar outlines a basin wall, which sinks steeply into the abyss. The sonar adduces the changing features of the bottom of the lake. The different colours on the screen also indicate the depth of the water and the various water temperature layers, or thermoclines. It is this basin wall and these changes in depth and water temperature that are tempting to life, particularly fish. The sonar outlines many fish underneath us. There are large moving fish schools of small fish, and close to them, there are swarms of larger fish, presumably pikes, the catch we are looking for.

The fish are mobile, but they stay in a relatively small area. Nonetheless, it took some time to locate promising stock. Since this discovery, we have been crisscrossing this distinct area, waltzing various lures near the fish, wooing and politely 'requesting' the fish to take a bite.

According to the sonar, the water temperature is +14 °C. The pike love this kind water. It's the pike's 'hunting season', so why doesn't it strike? I'm stupefied. Is it the changed weather? Helplessly, my mind goes back to yesterday. At this time and in the same spot, I was holding a rod, and on the end of the line was a large pike. After the hooking, we had had a long fight. The pike had run and dived. I had pumped, released and provided pressure time after time. I was almost closing the deal, ending the dance, when the pike suddenly jumped and managed to release itself from the hook. Its large tail waived goodbye as it dove back into the depths.

I've got the same lure in the water. Come on, what is the matter? You should know this fish by now! Feel it! Sense like a pike!

This vignette describes one moment in a day of competitive fishing, illustrating how the fishing practice is comprised of encounters between the fish and the anglers within the waterscape. It also illustrates the ways in which the movements of the human body and that of the fish, as well as both their senses, are central elements in the accomplishment of an angling practice. It highlights that the key dynamics of the mobility and movements of anglers is based on the senses. The angler seeks to understand the movements and senses of the fish by way of sensing the weather and the changing waterbody, either directly through his body or via technological devices such as sonar.

As this vignette indicates, the different encounters that make up fishing practice can be characterized as a kind of dance between a fish and an angler. This dance has elements of open position partner dancing, ballet and even line dancing. Our analysis brings forth three components of dance in competitive match fishing: (1) fish and anglers as dancing partners, (2) the waterbody as a dancing hall and (3) the weather as an orchestral accompaniment.

Dancing Partners

When fishing, the angler does not necessarily need to know his dance partner beforehand. However, in order to 'hook up' with a partner in this dance, he must first be properly introduced to his dancing partner. This introduction stipulates that he can locate the fish. In this quest, watercrafts are gliding here and there, performing crisscrossing choreography above the water, and looking constantly below the surface into the underwater world. The anglers seek to dive to abyss metaphorically because the aquatic

is a part of the practical understanding of fishing practice. The aquatic world is also the 'neighbourhood' of the fish.

Figure 1. Crisscrossing above Lake Kilpisjärvi.

To find a dance partner, the competent angler attempt to familiarise himself with the fish. The fish has a lifecycle of its own, as well as seasons of activity and diurnal rhythms. They eat and sleep. The times and places of these activities vary between species and also between individual fishes. A competent angler may specialise in one specific species (e.g., pike), but in match fishing, it makes sense to become acquainted with all 'catch' species in the competition at hand and, more broadly, with the ecosystem of the fish. In contrast to the vignette above, anglers seldom have the privilege of spending time exclusively on their own in a 'hot spot'. Usually, there are fellow anglers offering lures to fish. One crew can have up to a dozen lures in the water. In a way, trolling crews make up their own swarms, which exist next to the existing fish schools.

When the trolling watercrafts with their fascinating lures arrive in the fish's 'neighbourhood', a disturbance is caused. In the beginning, before the dance and partnering, there may be some reluctance in the water. The fish may move away from the angler as he attempts to move toward the fish. When approaching the fish, the angler endeavours to sense like a fish, to anticipate its location and the movements in the water, as well as its intent. The fish, like many other animals, can feel curiosity (Burghardt, 2005). Using different lures with different sensorial stimuli, anglers strive to rouse the curiosity of the fish. It is curiosity and sensorial cues that drive both humans and fish down new paths, in this case to the incipient partner dance.

The senses of the fish differ from those of a human. The fish does not have external ears, but anglers know that the fish hears with the inner ear (Franklin, 2001). Making the right kind of noise can be the key to getting a fish to strike. Thus, the angler

often makes a lure audible by attaching various sound effects, and he also knows that the noise from banging on the bottom of the boat will conduct extremely well into the water.

The anglers commonly try to learn about the senses of the fish for instance through magazines and meetup e-groups. For instance, the fish uses the sense of smell to search for nutrition, detect enemies, and identify its own species, and it uses taste to identify the quality of nutrition ([Franosch et al. 2009.](#)) While the fishing industry has developed feremenon gels that can be attached to a lure to attract fish, also more traditional means of enhancing lures, such as dipping them in the fish broth or spitting their own saliva onto the lure are used.

The Finnish freshwaters are not particularly clear, and therefore, the area that fish can see is limited—the weather and the light affect seeing ([Bleckmann & Zelick 2009.](#)) Colours disappear as one goes deeper into the water column. Therefore, the fish can spot the colours of the lure only fairly to close by in deeper waters. Anglers tend to also use visible colours in their lures, especially in muddy waters, on cloudy days or in deep waters. They help the fish to ‘see better’.

The fish also has a unique sense, known as the lateral line. With the aid of this sense, the fish can move in dark waters and in times when it is difficult to see (night/winter). It is a type of sonar that fish uses to orient, notice obstacles, and hunt. ([Bleckmann & Zelick, 2009.](#))

A competent angler wants to have at least one distinctive lure, which will stand out from the dozens of others being offered. Anglers seek to appeal to all the senses of the fish, and therefore, they create sensual stimulus bundles by bringing their lures to the right depth and close enough to the fish. In this way, the fish can see the colours; hear and feel the vibrations of the lure, which imitates the movements of a wounded quarry; and smell alluring scents.

The offered lure can be seen as a petition, as a way of asking a fish to dance. When [the fish bites the lure](#), dancing partners are hooked up. After this, the dance can finally begin. It is a dance of belonging that may turn out to be the last dance of all. This is partner dancing in an open position, in which the partners are connected without body contact. The dancing partner, the fish, is at 'arms reach'. The angler has a 'grip' on the partner through the rod and line. This phase of the dance emphasises the sense of touch and the dance's kinaesthetic dimensions. In fact, the partners usually do not see one another, due to the colour of the water or due the distance between them or the depth. The existence of the dance is expressed through bodily movements, and these are sensed by both parties through the fishing line. On the angler's side, the sense of hearing is 'knotted' to the kinaesthetic movement. The angler can hear the loud sound of the reel's fishing drag, and at the same time, he can feel how the hard the fish pulls on the line. This gives the angler a hint regarding the size of the fish. The other partner, the fish, receives sensory perceptions via the line pressure using the sense of touch and the lateral line.

This partner dance is not strictly choreographed. At least, the other dance partner has not 'read the manuscript'; even if the angler has written such. There is not fixed leader and follower roles. Usually, in dancing the leader suggests, through his lead, the figures that will be executed. The leader has the privilege of maintaining the rhythm and deciding what figures he is going to lead the other dancer into. The angler, on the one hand, strives to lead by maintaining a tight line, reeling and pulling with the rod in a smooth manner. On the other hand, when a fish is making a run and is in charge, the angler gives out line and allows the fish to lead and perform its own dance manoeuvres.

In this form of dance, the partners lead and follow one another, switching back and forth. They compete with one another for the leading role. For instance, the fish wishes to be a principal dancer and to perform 'adagio's' leaping solos in the 'pas de

deux', in the dance duet. The angler is often in the role of the follower, who does not have any idea what the leader, the fish, will do next. There is always the possibility of failing in moments of resistance and evasion during this dance. The angler's knowledge of the special conduct of a given fish species reduces the risk of stamping on his dance partner's toes.

'Fighting' and 'landing the fish' are the closing phases of this partner dance. Then, anglers must adjust their own movements, considering those of their fellow fishermen sharing the watercraft's relatively small inner spaces. In dance terms, this could be 'a rolling grapevine' move or a form of line dancing. Along with performing such dance moves, anglers must also manoeuvre the watercraft to enable practice performance.

This partner dance can end in many ways. The fish can get away. Its 'runs' and leaps, as dance manoeuvres, can be successful due to line breaks or detachment from the hook. Then, the fish is the 'winner of the dance competition'. Or, the last dance can occur above the water, at the bottom of the vessel. This is a dance of death, and the inanimate fish will never dance again. [The following excerpt from the field diary indicates one passing moment.](#)

[I look at the bottom of my watercraft. Yes, the big, dead corpse of a pike lies there. It is easy to tell, it's my record, and the biggest fish I have ever caught! I hear my dad's rejoicing voice, 'Yes, Yes, YES!' Still, in this peak moment I am mostly puzzled. My mind somehow can't join to my father's feelings. I ask myself, 'Where is the joy and elation? Why don't I feel satisfied? Why do I feel so numb?' I take one more look at the big fish and remorse starts to grip me.](#)

[After the tumult of the fish dance, it is not unusual that the angler feels remorse for the fish and its destiny. Perhaps the angler is hoping that there could be an alternative end, a](#)

happy one, a win-win situation in which both dance partners could depart as living and more experienced ‘dancers’.

The deceased fish can still be in touch with the ‘living world’ through its dead body. For instance, in trophy-shots the fish corpse is held by the hands of the angler and memorialised in pictures. There is yet another bodily resurrection, or magical encore, namely the weighing of the catch. The deceased fish can lead the angler to glory on the podium. This can also be seen as reinforcing both the supremacy of the human and the oppression of the animal (Birke, 2012). Finally, on certain occasions anglers make food from their catch, and gather together for shared meals – an act that honours both the fish and the anglers. Furthermore, eating the catch represents another form of bodily entanglement between the angler and the fish (Probyn, 20016).

Dancehall

The above dance encounter takes place in a certain waterbody, a dance hall. In this study, the dance hall is a river or lake whose surface area and depth topography change repeatedly. These waters may have reefs or islets, and their landscape is volatile—no inner or outer homogeneity is to be found. The dance hall’s general features and topographical structure guide life under the water and the praxis of the fish determining also the possibility of the fish surviving in the water. The specific features, such as the basin wall, create an essential framework for a functional microecosystem and the well-being for the fish.

As illustrated in the vignette, the basin wall is an anomaly in the otherwise monotonic structure of the bed of the water, gathering a magnitude of organisms and provides the basis of a rich food chain. For instance, the larger predatory fish seek out the schools of small fish, which in turn find their nutrition in the basin area. Situational

changes in the surroundings of the waterbody can also threaten the lives of the organisms in it. For example, long-lasting hot weather and a high-pressure area can warm the water too greatly. Then, thermoclines disappear and there is only warm water left, which constitutes a threat to the organisms in it as the oxygen may run out.

Waterbody's common and situational circumstances define whether the dance will flow. Is the dancehall's floor slippery or frictional? Is there space, or is it crowded? Before the dance 'match up', trolling watercrafts wander over every part of the dancehall, in the corners and in the midst of the floor, looking for a dance partner. In this search, anglers own bodies are moving in the vessel, and the same time, their bodies are moved by the watercraft.

The watercraft is moving simultaneously in the landscapes above and under the water. The non-human dance hall's unique feature is this vertical depth dimension. There is an aquatic, underwater landscape that is impacted by the conditions above it. For instance, the air pressure and temperature, wind and weather (e.g., sunny/rainy) determine the state of the water. Are there surface waves or high-wind waves? What kind of thermoclines is present?

The dance hall can be crowded for purely topographical reasons. Also, the number of trolling watercrafts can cause jams. Dance cavaliers may come too close to one another. The situational elements waterbody, such as whether there is calm or surf, may operate as friction in the dance hall. Therefore, trolling crafts' motions above the water may not be smooth. The vessel may be bouncing and tossing around from one wave to another. Metaphorically, the watercraft represents dancing shoes. There may or not be friction between the shoes and the dance floor during the glide above the water. The dancing shoes can also be slippery and cause the dance to fail. Next, consider an excerpt describing the act of landing a fish:

The fish had made several runs, leaped and dived. I could feel less drag, less pressure in the line. Then, the fish stops running and I manage to reel in the slack line. The fish finally surfaces and flashes its flank. Softly, I mutter, 'Reckon it's about time.' My dad stands up from the cockpit on the left—he knows what I mean. Dad is the net-man. It is his job to land the fish. Perhaps due the long wait, my dad hastily rushes by to retrieve the net from the right side of the boat. He nudges me as he goes past. Dad is a tall man, a big fish in a small pond. I almost fall overboard and drop the rod. Without saying a word, my dad returns with the net. I feel yet another impact. This time, it's the landing nets hoop and the rubber mesh that grazes my face. At same time, the boat is tossed unexpected way by the waves. There is no one to hold the wheel, no one to forewarn us of the coming waves. This is the last straw. I lose my balance and start to fall...

This excerpt shows how both anglers' own bodily doings in the craft and also the water's sudden practices (the coming waves), which move the watercraft and the bodies within, can cause friction and stumbling, that is, stepping on toes.

An angler encounters the water and its changing nature via the 'formal western senses': sight, hearing, smell, taste and the sense of touch and its kinaesthetic constituents. In these sensory encounters, the embodied doings and collectively shared meanings of the space are produced and attached to it. In this way, a neutral 'space' is shaped into a specific dynamic 'place', a multifaceted sensory waterscape, and perhaps into a 'holy ground' of match making.

Dance Orchestra

Dances differ from one another in the same way that the rhythms of different types of

music do. The rumba is danced differently from samba or swing. In the ‘dancelike’ fishing practice, the weather acts as a dance orchestra providing the music for the dancers. The rhythm of the music, in turn, orchestrates the circumstances of the dance hall, that is, the waterbody. It moulds the context in which both fish and anglers saunter. The rhythm that the weather provides organises the match fishing praxis. Is it possible to fish? Where should the watercraft be piloted to? The weather above the waterline also shapes the weather below the waterline. The ‘weather below’ (e.g., the water pressure and temperature) affects the behaviours of predatory fish and fish schools, including their whereabouts and movements. For example, in times of high water pressure, the fish gravitate toward the colder layers of water on the bottom. There, they are inactive, and feeding activity is low. In the angler’s practical understanding, such fish are said to have ‘lock-jaw’.

The weather provides the basic beat for the praxis of fishing, and it also affects the dancing style of the potential partner dance. The weather and its various material forms, especially the wind, stipulate the rhythm of the dance. Is it a hot-tempered and hectic rumba of high tides or dancing cheek-to-cheek at a slow tempo in calm waters?

Figure 2. Rumbling rumba of high waves.

Rhythm is ‘the perception of an order’ (Fraisse 1982, 151). This definition implies that we can predict or anticipate what will come next in a rhythmic sequence. In arrhythmia, in contrast, such an order is not assessed directly (ibid.). In match fishing, this arrhythmia emerges when anglers are water bound and something unexpected happens in terms of the weather. Competent anglers will attempt to avoid this and seek to sense the upcoming weather and water circumstances—they want to be weather-wise (see Rantala et al., 2011).

For anglers, preparation for the dance and journey to the dance hall begins with a consideration of the prospective weather. Anglers do not rely solely on meteorological radar forecasts and other weather prediction techniques. They also utilise prediction by observation and, try to interpret the ‘sensorial cues’ of nature and attach them to experiences and knowledge, both their own and those of others. This implies, for instance, interpreting the colours of the water, waves and clouds, as well as air odours. Observations of certain plants, such as trees (the movement of sprigs and the swaying of the trees) or certain animals’ appearance and behaviours (e.g., swallows’ flight altitude, with a low altitude indicating rain) can also be a basis for the prediction of the weather.

The prevailing weather conditions constitute a central feature of the waterscape and play a crucial role in shaping the sensory elements of the scape in question. Next, consider an excerpt from a narrative describing fishing in challenging changing summer weather conditions:

... Our watercraft is moving quickly to the competition centre. We are fleeing from the upcoming storm. Longish waves begin to form due to the wind. Our aluminium craft bounces from one wave to another. I have to hang onto the railing not to fall overboard. Water is pounding against the watercraft, splashing inside, making us wet and even colder. The wind is getting more intense. I feel it blowing more forcefully against my face, and at the same time, the wind whistles in my ears. The waves instantly become even longer. With another bounce, my head is flipped backwards, and all of the sudden, I am gazing at the sky, where more and more dark clouds are gathering. It smells like rain. The wind begins to wail, and instantly, the rain streams down.

This excerpt illustrates that a sudden weather change may surprise even relatively skilled anglers who have tried to anticipate the forthcoming weather. Coping with sudden

arrhythmia typically requires altered fishing practices, for example, seeking the shoreline or some other shelter from the waves. Sudden arrhythmia also affects various senses. Usually, the proprioceptive (sense of balance) sensations are emphasised. In addition to sudden arrhythmias, there are also seasonal changes in the weather. In our context, Finnish Lapland, in the summer season, the weather can range from heat to sleet. The weather's rhythm also determines the angler's dress code in the dance hall. On rainy days, a floating suit is needed. In sun, the dress code is more casual, and a swimsuit is allowed.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has provided an empirically grounded analysis of the ways in which humans and nonhumans, anglers and fish, interact bodily and sensorially in the waterscape in the midst of a match fishing practice. It suggested that this multifaceted encounter is best described as a form of partner dance, as a dance with a fish. This metaphor enables us to highlight the embodied, dynamic and changing nature of the encounter and focus on the agential qualities of non-human entities. Fishes and waterbodies are not passive targets or platforms for actions but active constituents of the action. Our study thereby contributes to the existing leisure studies literature, which has begun to include the nonhuman world, in the following ways.

Firstly, our study offers novel insights into the ways in which the bodies and senses of both of the animal and the human play a role in the encounter. The first part of the analysis detailed how the anglers search for a dance partner in the dance hall. In this search, the angler is attempting to adopt, bodily and mentally, the same wavelength as the fish. This can be understood as an *ortega-y-gassian-process*, which refers to 'being open to the animal'. Anglers are, for instance, attempting to adopt many of the practices of fishes, such as eating, and set their human practices aside. Our analysis further elaborated

upon the actual dance and the ways in which partners are in touch with one another through the material elements of line and rod. While perhaps ephemeral, the encounter carries meanings of deep connectedness. The non-human and the human exchange intense and extremely sensual moments. The angler is able to sense the fish, as an individual, and connect this sensation to the fish's species-specific attributes. In sensing like a fish, the angler is, in a way, becoming an animal, not in terms of understand the fish's inner experiences (Mueller, 2017) but in terms of the fish's practical understanding. This may not be merely a one-sided change, because the fish may also be pulled into becoming a man (Włodarczyk, 2017). Then, the fish has the prospect of becoming aware of the angler's intentions and practices, of learning how a man acts. Thus, the fish is acting not on but with the human anglers (Haraway 2005).

In the dance, the fish is considered to be a discerning artist of the waterworld. For instance, it has the ability to choose to strike or not to strike the lures offered. Thus, the fish has pivotal agency. This somewhat deviates with the existing literature on human-animal relationships and its latent humanocentrism. For instance, Daspher (2016) argues that while the horses in human-horse-relationships are able to demonstrate some agency by choosing to interact with or ignore humans, their choices are 'bound by the human-centric context in which these interactions take place' (ibid, 4). In our case, in turn, there are various levels of freedom. Our findings also differ from the previous literature on hunting (e.g., Marvin 2005), which concerns the honing of man's abilities to defeat the animal.

Secondly, our analysis of the waterscape contributes to the existing knowledge of leisure landscapes. In her study of surfing, Humberstone (2011) emphasises that the landscape structure in water-based activities is important because the 'seascape' is always mobile and fluid. Humberstone provides an account of how this changing scape evokes

human emotions—it's about feeling-in-the-place. Our analysis, in turn, demonstrates how the ever-changing waterscape is coped with via adjusted and embodied sensory practices—for us it's doing-in-the-place. In line with our approach, Humberstone (2011) illuminates the animate and sensory characteristics of the waterscape. However, she is concerned only with the world above the water. We suggest that the waterscape structure is divided into interconnected above-water and underwater 'landscapes'. By highlighting this dual nature of the waterscape, our analysis offers a novel perspective as compared to studies of landscape framed by the notion of 'gaze' and focusing commonly on the aboveground landscape (Urry & Larsen 2011). We also continue the discussion concerning the active agency of natural elements over leisure places (Cloke & Perkins, 2005) by pointing out the dynamic relationship between the above-water and underwater worlds. The weather above the waterbody affects the conditions of below, where the fish are. Then again, the underwater fish guides the actions of anglers in the above-water landscape.

Thirdly, our understanding of the role of the weather as a force of nature adds to pending discussions of non-human agency in leisure activities. In their work, Rantala and colleagues (2011) articulate how weather guides the material and corporeal human practices that take place in natural environments. Our analysis continues this insight by discerning how weather also governs the practices of non-humans as well. For instance, the changing weather above the surface, such as a torrent or storm, causes arrhythmia in the waterbody (e.g., tumultuousness). This, in turn, breaks up the practice routine of fishes and anglers. We do not treat sudden weather changes as a mere disruption (see Cloke & Perkins, 2005). For us, arrhythmia is a new situation that calls for situated weather practices. The arrhythmia evoked by the weather and its agency in leisure activities and the waterscape contributes to existing discussions of the relationship between humans

and non-humans. In fact, we suggest that a waterbody's arrhythmia can be treated as a special kind of landscape.

All in all, we have used the metaphor of dance to describe the relational entanglement between fish, angler, and waterbody in the fishing competition. The metaphors are not without problems, as they simultaneously highlight and hide aspects of the phenomenon (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The metaphor of dance highlights the very logic of the fishing practice, as it clarifies that fishing is a pair activity—it takes two to tango.

Furthermore, the given metaphor enables one to highlight the thoroughly embodied nature of the practice. Both dancing and fishing are bodily activities in which one has to account for the bodily movements of others, in this case, the bodily movements of the non-human fish. As dancers, the anglers have to improvise, often because of suddenly changing weather conditions.

While the metaphor of dance arguably is human-centric, it still accords the fish a more 'equal' position in the sense that the fish is understood as a partner that has the power to guide and frame the anglers' actions. Dance—especially a duet—is a gendered activity. The practice of fishing is predominantly a male-centred activity and involves logic as well as sayings and doings that are commonly interpreted as masculine, such as competing, fighting and winning. Therefore, the metaphor of dance is hardly appropriate for an analysis that seeks to uncover wider socio-political implications of the thoroughly gendered nature of more-than-human entanglements formed around fishing, as cogently discussed by Elsbeth Probyn (2016). Yet, it captures adequately the cluttered encounter of the human-animal relationship in the practice of match fishing, during which both parties are bodily knotted to each other's in a swaying motion. As one angler explained while in the midst of the whirl of fighting: 'One step forward, two

steps back. Heck, this fish is leading this waltz. I'll bet this will go to the last call'.

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Figure captions:

Figure 1. Crisscrossing above Lake Kilpisjärvi.

Figure 2. Rumbling rumba of high waves.